2025 OER Program Annual Report

Middle Tennessee State University

The mission of the OER program is to expand the use of open educational resources at MTSU and to educate and promote the value of OER to the MTSU community.

Our program goals:

- Promote the creation, adaptation, adoption, curation, and discovery of openly licensed materials by our instructors and students
- Provide support for instructors to incorporate openly licensed educational resources into their curriculum
- Improve availability and affordability of course materials
- Advocate for the removal of barriers for student learning through OER adoption

Quick Facts:

Courses using OER are designated as **Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC)** in the course schedule. ZTC courses do not require students to purchase any course materials, and instructors may use open educational resources, library-licensed materials, other free online resources, or no course materials at all.

 Since Spring 2022, ZTC courses have:

- Impacted **27,342 students**
- Been used in **210 courses across 1,000+ sections**
- Saved students approximately **$2.73 million**
- Averaged **$600,000 in savings in the last fall and spring semesters**
- Represented **6% of all course sections** in Spring 2025

For more information, visit the ZTC Data Dashboard.

2024-2025 Program Highlights:

Faculty Workshops

In partnership with the LT&ITC, the OER program co-hosted two professional development events:

- **OER 101 Workshop with Dr. David Wiley (October 17, 2024):**
  A foundational introduction to OER and open licensing. Co-sponsored by the library, LT&ITC, and MTSU Online. **27 attended**. Watch the recording
- **OER Champions Showcase (March 5, 2025):**
  A panel featuring MTSU faculty who have authored OER, sharing insights on teaching, equity, and student success. Held during Open Education Week. **21 attended.** Watch the recording

Student Engagement

During Open Education Week (March 3–7, 2025), we hosted tabling events at Walker Library and the Student Union. We engaged with approximately **80 students** and collected **14 "textbook story" submissions** to amplify student voices about the cost of course materials.

We asked students, *"What's your experience with textbook costs?"* A few of their responses:

- "Sometimes I have to prioritize textbooks over groceries." - Sophomore, Biology/Anthropology
- "It made it really hard because I pay for everything myself and having to spend an extra almost $500 on books makes it so much more difficult." - Freshman, Biochemistry
- "I wasn't financially prepared. I have to get two jobs just to pay for the books." - Junior, Supply Chain

OER Grant Pilot

In Fall 2024, with $10,000 in funding from the Office of the Provost, the library launched a pilot round of Affordable Course Materials Grants funding 3 faculty-led projects to adopt, adapt, or create OER. Projects are expected to be completed by the beginning of Spring 2026.

- **Aerospace 1010** – Harley Waters, Lecturer, was awarded $4,000 to create an OER textbook for AERO 1010: Introduction to Aerospace, the first required course for aerospace majors. The textbook will combine original content with public domain resources and will include interactive assessments to enhance student engagement and learning.
- **English 1020** – Dr. Kate Pantelides, Professor, Caroline LaPlue, GTA, and Nicholas Krause, GTA, were awarded $3,000 to create a second edition of the OER textbook in ENGL 1020: Research and Argumentative Writing. The textbook will include revised chapters aligned with TBC outcomes, a more accessible design, and an appendix outlining sustainable teaching practices.
- **Geosciences 1031** – Laura Collins, Instructor, was awarded $3,000 to create an OER lab manual for GEOL 1031: Introduction to Earth Science. The manual will include customized lab exercises aligned to course objectives and has the potential for long-term student savings across multiple sections.

Collectively, these three projects are expected to impact 4,400 MTSU students and save more than $440,000 in textbook costs annually.

OER Publishing

This year, **five new open textbooks** were published through MTSU's Pressbooks platform, bringing the total to **18 titles** in our local catalog:

- [REMOTE PILOT Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Knowledge Test Study Guide](#) (AERO 2710 & AERO 2715)
- [Interdisciplinary Research and Problem Solving](#) (PRST 3995)
- [Engineering Capstone: A Guide to Senior Design for Engineering and Technology](#) (ENGR 4580, ENGR 4590, ET 4801, ET 4802, & ET 4803)
- [Robotics and Controls Engineering](#) (ENGR 4530 & ET 4860)
- [Bon Voyage Volume 1](#) (FREN 1010)

Media & Recognition

The OER program was highlighted in multiple university publications this year:

- [MTSU Magazine, Winter 2025](#) (p. 39)
- [JEWL Magazine, Fall 2024](#)
- [MTSU Top Stories of 2024](#)
- [President's 2024 Year-in-Review Video](#)

Looking Ahead:

Priorities for 2025-2026

- **Expanded Grant Program**
  We will offer a second round of Affordable Course Materials Grants with increased funding of $15,000 from the Office of the Provost. Selected projects will begin development in September 2025.
- **Textbook Heroes Awards**
  In partnership with SGA, we are launching a Textbook Heroes Award to recognize and celebrate up to three faculty members annually who demonstrate outstanding commitment to textbook affordability. Winners will be announced during Open Education Week and featured on the library's website.
- **Student Course Materials Survey**
  A campus-wide survey will be distributed in Fall 2025 to better understand how the cost of course materials affect MTSU students. Results will inform next steps for affordability initiatives.
- **Low-Cost Course Marking**
  Pending survey findings, we will explore implementing a "Low-Cost" course designation for classes using affordable (but not entirely free) materials.

OER Program Leadership:

The OER program is currently led by Ginelle Baskin, Open Education Librarian, at Walker Library. She coordinates program initiatives, faculty support, student outreach, and campus partnerships to expand the use of open educational resources at MTSU.

The program is also supported by members of the Academic and Student Success Subcommittee of MTSU's Community Engagement Advisory Group, who serve as advocates and advisors for OER-related efforts across campus.

OER Resources:

- MTSU's OER Website
- Walker Library's OER Research Guide
- MTSU Pressbooks Network
- Zero Textbook Cost Data Dashboard